ORIGINAL EC COMICS FROM THE 1950s!

CRIME

AN ENTERTAINING COMIC

NO. 11
MAY

CRIME SUSPENSTORIES

AN ENTERTAINING COMIC

2.00
2.75
CANADA

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE!
AN ILLUSTRATED TERROR-TALE FROM THE HAUNT OF FEAR!

BEING AN *ANATOMY PROFESSOR* AFFORDS ME THE PERFECT PLACE TO DISPOSE OF MY *WIFE'S BODY!* NOW SHE'LL BE JUST ANOTHER *CORPSE* FOR MY *DISSECTION CLASS!*

STIFF *Punishment!*

I STORMED FROM THE HOUSE IN A BLACK AND ANGRY MOOD. JO ANN AND I HAD HAD ANOTHER OF OUR FREQUENT QUARRELS, AND I WAS GLAD THAT I WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO LEAVE BEFORE MY TEMPER AND EMOTIONS HAD RUN AWAY WITH ME! FOR EACH TIME WE ARGUED, IT BECAME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR ME TO KEEP FROM *KILLING* HER!

THAT WOMAN IS DRIVING ME *INSANE!* ONE OF THESE DAYS... ONE OF THESE DAYS...

I CLIMBED INTO MY CAR AND HEADED FOR THE MEDICAL COLLEGE! AND AS I BREATHED DEEPLY OF THE CRISP AUTUMN AIR, I THOUGHT OF THE VACATION FOUR YEARS AGO WHEN I HAD FIRST MET JO ANN...

...A *PROFESSOR* AT A *MEDICAL SCHOOL*? OH, HOW *THRILLING*!

NOT VERY EXCITING, I'M AFRAID! BUT SECURE... AND PLEASANT!

JO ANN WAS FIFTEEN YEARS YOUNGER THAN I, BUT IT HAD MADE NO DIFFERENCE! BEFORE MY VACATION WAS OVER, WE HAD BEEN MARRIED...

YOU'VE MADE ME VERY HAPPY, JO ANN, DARLING!

I'M HAPPY, TOO, FRED! AND THIS RING IS BEAUTIFUL! 'TO JO ANN FROM FRED... FEBRUARY 9, 1948'...

JUSTICE of the ACE

WE HAD BOUGHT A HOUSE JUST OUTSIDE THE COLLEGE...BUT FROM THE BEGINNING, THINGS HADN'T GONE WELL...ESPECIALLY WHEN SHE FOUND OUT THE NATURE OF MY WORK!

YOU MEAN YOU *CUT UP DEAD BODIES*? HOW *REVOLTING*!

REVOLTING? BUT...BUT, JO ANN... *DISSECTION* IS AN IMPORTANT PHASE OF A STUDENT'S COURSE! IT FAMILIARIZES THEM WITH THE HUMAN BODY, AND ENABLES THEM TO DETERMINE CAUSES OF DEATH! IT'S *VERY* IMPORTANT!

I HAD NEVER BEEN ABLE TO MAKE HER UNDERSTAND! SLOWLY BUT SURELY, SHE BEGAN TO TURN AGAINST ME BECAUSE SHE DESPISED MY WORK... AND IN DEFENSE, I TURNED AGAINST HER!

WILL YOU LEAVE THOSE BOOKS *ALONE*? HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU HAVE TO BE TOLD?

OH, SHUT UP! YOU AND YOUR GHOULISH BOOKS! YOU MAKE ME *SICK*!

THE WHOLE ASPECT OF OUR RELATIONSHIP CHANGED! MOST OF THE TIME WE NEVER SPOKE TO ONE ANOTHER...AND WHEN WE DID, IT WAS TO *QUARREL*!

WHO PUT UP THOSE IDIOTIC CURTAINS?

I DID! AND IF YOU TOUCH THEM, I'LL *BRAIN* YOU!

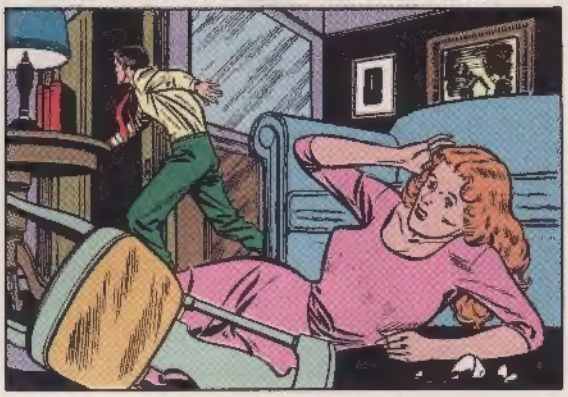
OH, YEAH? WE'LL SEE ABOUT *THAT*!

I WARNED YOU...

R-RIP

WHACK!

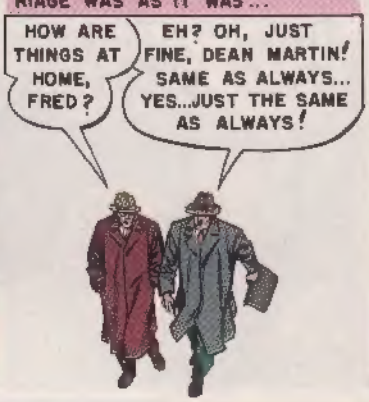
THAT HAD BEEN THE FIRST TIME WE HAD ACTUALLY COME TO BLOWS! SHE HAD SPRAWLED ON THE FLOOR, A STUNNED LOOK ON HER FACE, AND I HAD RACED FROM THE HOUSE, FRIGHTENED BY THE FEELING OF SATISFACTION IT HAD GIVEN ME...



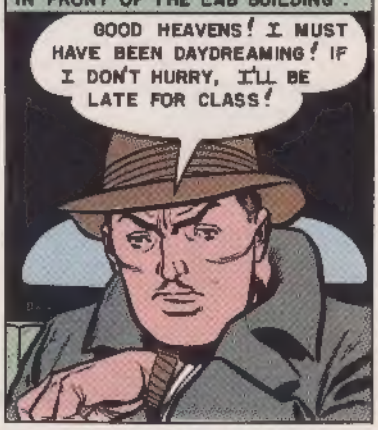
AFTER THAT, WE BOTH KNEW WE COULD NEVER BE HAPPY UNDER THE SAME ROOF! SHE SEEMED TO REJOICE IN AGGRAVATING ME... SEEING ME IN A RAGE WAS *HER* WAY OF GAINING SATISFACTION...

AND, AS ALWAYS, I *DID* RUSH FROM THE HOUSE! BUT ONLY BECAUSE I KNEW THAT IF I'D STAYED, I WOULD'VE *KILLED* HER!

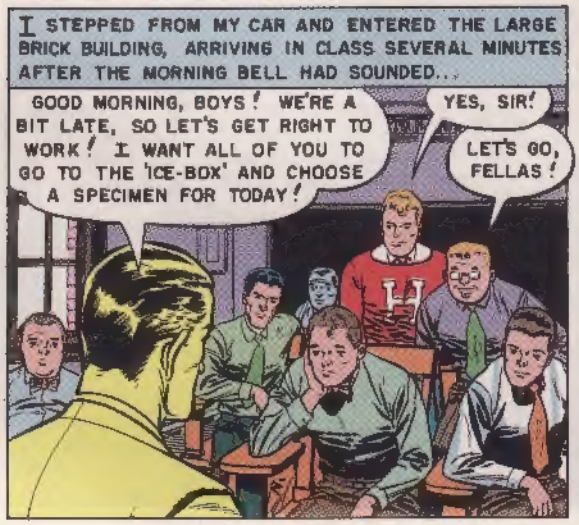
IT WAS FORTUNATE THAT WE LIVED FAR FROM ANYONE ELSE... FOR AT THE MEDICAL SCHOOL, NO ONE EVEN DREAMED MY MARRIAGE WAS AS IT WAS...



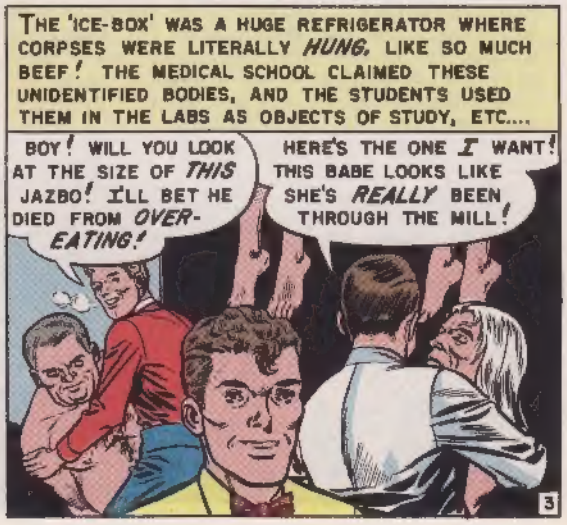
SUDDENLY, MY THOUGHTS RETURNED TO THE PRESENT! I WAS STILL IN THE CAR, PARKED IN FRONT OF THE LAB BUILDING!



I STEPPED FROM MY CAR AND ENTERED THE LARGE BRICK BUILDING, ARRIVING IN CLASS SEVERAL MINUTES AFTER THE MORNING BELL HAD SOUNDED...


GOOD MORNING, BOYS! WE'RE A BIT LATE, SO LET'S GET RIGHT TO WORK! I WANT ALL OF YOU TO GO TO THE 'ICE-BOX' AND CHOOSE A SPECIMEN FOR TODAY!
YES, SIR!
LET'S GO, FELLAS!

THE 'ICE-BOX' WAS A HUGE REFRIGERATOR WHERE CORPSES WERE LITERALLY *HUNG*, LIKE SO MUCH BEEF! THE MEDICAL SCHOOL CLAIMED THESE UNIDENTIFIED BODIES, AND THE STUDENTS USED THEM IN THE LABS AS OBJECTS OF STUDY, ETC....


BOY! WILL YOU LOOK AT THE SIZE OF *THIS* JAZBO! I'LL BET HE DIED FROM *OVER-EATING!*
HERE'S THE ONE *I* WANT! THIS BABE LOOKS LIKE SHE'S *REALLY* BEEN THROUGH THE MILL!

YOU GUYS ARE ALWAYS CLOWNING! THIS IS SERIOUS WORK!
HO, HO! LISTEN TO GRANDPA!
HEY! LEND A HAND! THIS GUY IS HEAVY!
WHY IS IT YOU LITTLE GUYS ALWAYS GRAB THE BIGGEST BODIES?
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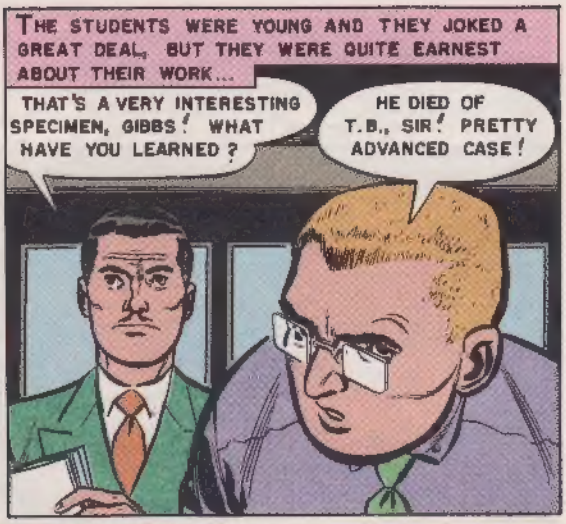
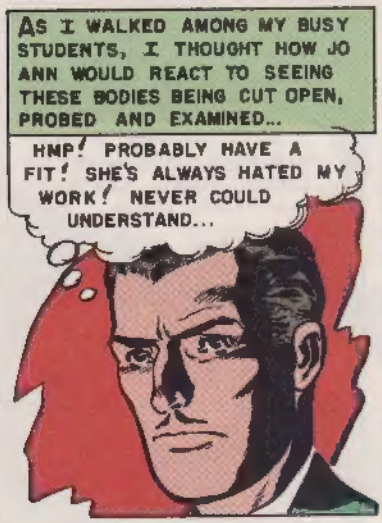
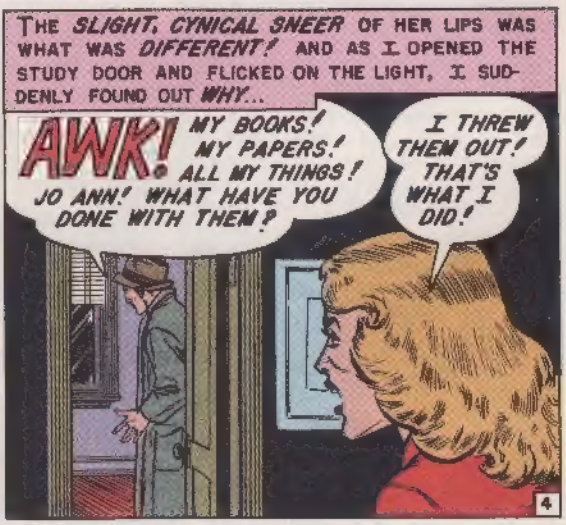

THE STUDENTS WERE YOUNG AND THEY JOKED A GREAT DEAL, BUT THEY WERE QUITE EARNEST ABOUT THEIR WORK...
THAT'S A VERY INTERESTING SPECIMEN, GIBBS! WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?
HE DIED OF T.B., SIR! PRETTY ADVANCED CASE!


AS I WALKED AMONG MY BUSY STUDENTS, I THOUGHT HOW JO ANN WOULD REACT TO SEEING THESE BODIES BEING CUT OPEN, PROBED AND EXAMINED...
HMP! PROBABLY HAVE A FIT! SHE'S ALWAYS HATED MY WORK! NEVER COULD UNDERSTAND...

IT SEEMED LIKE ONLY A SHORT WHILE, BUT BEFORE I KNEW IT, THE BELL WAS RINGING AGAIN, ANNOUNCING THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY...
ALL RIGHT, GENTLEMEN! THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY!
BLAST IT! NOW I'LL HAVE TO GO HOME TO JO ANN!

AFTER THE STUDENTS HAD GONE, I GATHERED MY PAPERS AND BRIEF CASE AND WALKED TO MY CAR. I DROVE SLOWLY ALL THE WAY HOME...TRYING TO POSTPONE MY ARRIVAL...

BUT EVENTUALLY I ENTERED THE HOUSE. JO ANN WAS SEATED ON THE COUCH WITH THE FAMILIAR EXPRESSION ON HER FACE...ONLY THIS TIME IT WAS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT! WE GLARED AT EACH OTHER MOMENTARILY, AND I STALKED TOWARD MY STUDY...


THE SLIGHT, CYNICAL SNEER OF HER LIPS WAS WHAT WAS DIFFERENT! AND AS I OPENED THE STUDY DOOR AND FLICKED ON THE LIGHT, I SUDDENLY FOUND OUT WHY...
AWK! MY BOOKS! MY PAPERS! ALL MY THINGS! JO ANN! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THEM?
I THREW THEM OUT! THAT'S WHAT I DID!

I TURNED AND STARED AT HER, SMOULDERING IN ANGER AND HATE! SHE EXPECTED ME TO RAVE... TO SCREAM VILE OATHS...TO *THREATEN* HER AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS AS I HAD ALWAYS DONE...

WELL? WHY DON'T YOU SAY SOMETHING? WHY ARE YOU STARING AT ME LIKE THAT?!!

THIS TIME, JO ANN, YOU HAVE GONE TOO FAR...

THE HUSHED, ICY TONE OF MY VOICE STARTLED HER. SHE DREW BACK, A LOOK OF FEAR FLICKING ACROSS HER FACE! I WAS IN NO MOOD FOR RANTING MERE WORDS! I WAS FAR BEYOND THAT STAGE...AND THE EXPRESSION THAT WAS SLOWLY CREEPING INTO HER EYES TOLD ME SHE KNEW THAT *THIS WAS THE SHOWDOWN!*

I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, JO ANN, LIKE I ALWAYS SAID I WOULD! AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO WITH YOUR BODY? *DO YOU?*

...KEEP BACK... STAY AWAY FROM ME...

AFTER YOU'RE *DEAD*, I'M GOING TO CUT YOUR FACE TO *RIBBONS* SO NO ONE WILL RECOGNIZE YOU! AND THEN I'M GOING TO LET MY STUDENTS USE YOUR CORPSE TO...

FRED! STOP! NO! I'M SORRY!

IT'S TOO LATE TO BE SORRY! YOU'VE ALWAYS *HATED* MY WORK...BUT NOW YOU'LL BE A *PART* OF IT!

KEEP AWAY! DON'T TOUCH ME!!

I LUNGED AT HER! ALL THE FURY AND HATE THAT WAS WITHIN ME BURST FORTH IN A MADDENING SURGE FOR REVENGE! AND SHE FOUGHT BACK WITH THE FRENZIED STRENGTH OF A PERSON WHOSE LIFE HANGS IN THE BALANCE...

MY FISTS WERE LEADEN HAMMERS THAT CLUBBED AND POUNDED HER...MY FINGERS WERE CLAWS THAT RIPPED AND TORE! SHE BATTLED WITH AN INTENSE FURY AS WE THRASHED ABOUT THE ROOM, LEAVING HAVOC IN OUR WAKE...AND I ROARED WITH A GLOATING EXULTATION AS, LITTLE BY LITTLE, BIT BY BIT, SHE WEAKENED...

HOW LONG WE STRUGGLED, I DON'T KNOW...BUT AN OMINOUS SILENCE SEEMED TO CLEAR MY SENSES! HER BODY WAS COMPLETELY LIMP...AND HER EYES BULGED FROM THEIR SOCKETS FROM THE PRESSURE OF MY FINGERS THAT WERE KNOTTED AROUND HER NECK!

THERE WAS NO TIME TO BE SORRY. A FEW QUICK VICIOUS SLASHES WITH A KITCHEN KNIFE ENTIRELY OBLITERATED HER FEATURES! THEN, AFTER PULLING HER TEETH AND REMOVING HER JEWELRY AND CLOTHING, MY WIFE WAS COMPLETELY UNRECOGNIZABLE...

AFTER HURRIEDLY WRAPPING HER BODY IN A HEAVY BLANKET AND DUMPING IT IN THE BACK SEAT OF THE CAR, I DROVE TO THE COLLEGE WHERE I PARKED IN THE SHADOWS OF THE LAB BUILDING...

NO ONE AROUND! SO FAR SO GOOD! NOW TO GET HER INSIDE!

MEDICAL LABORATORY BUILDING

A FEW MOMENTS LATER, I HAD HER SAFELY STASHED AWAY IN THE 'ICE BOX'...

AH! THERE! NEATLY STACKED JUST LIKE THE OTHERS! THEY'LL *NEVER* EXPECT YOU TO BE *HERE!* HEH! HEH! HEH! HEH!

I LEFT THE BUILDING, DROVE HOME, AND AN HOUR LATER HAD REMOVED ALL SIGNS OF STRUGGLE, AND DISPOSED OF ALL INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE..

THE NEXT MORNING, AFTER A FINAL CHECK TO SEE THAT EVERYTHING WAS IN ORDER, I SUMMONED THE *POLICE!*

YOU SAY YOUR WIFE DIDN'T COME HOME LAST NIGHT?

THAT'S RIGHT! AND I'M TERRIBLY *WORRIED!*

THE TWO DETECTIVES REMAINED FOR SOME TIME AND ASKED A GREAT MANY QUESTIONS, BUT I GAVE THEM NO REASON WHATSOEVER TO SUSPECT ME...

YOUR WIFE WAS FIFTEEN YEARS *YOUNGER* THAN YOU, EH? AND ALSO A GOOD LOOKER! YOU THINK SHE MIGHT'VE... I MEAN...ANOTHER MAN, MAYBE?

ANOTHER *MAN?* OH, NO...NOT MY *JO ANN!* I *KNOW* SHE'D NEVER DO ANYTHING LIKE *THAT!*

SOMETIME LATER THEY LEFT, AND I WAS SURE THEY THOUGHT ONLY WHAT I WANTED THEM TO THINK...THAT JO ANN HAD RUN OFF WITH ANOTHER MAN...

HA, HA, HA! THE FOOLS! THEY'LL *NEVER* FIND HER!

SEVERAL DAYS PASSED AND I WAS JUST BEGINNING TO ENJOY THE NEW-FOUND PEACE IN MY LIFE...
ALL RIGHT, MEN! LET'S GET BUSY! GO TO THE 'ICE-BOX' AND SELECT A BODY!
THE STUDENTS HAD NO SOONER LEFT THE ROOM, WHEN IN WALKED THE DETECTIVES...
OH! YOU... STARTLED ME... I...
DIDN'T MEAN TO, PROFESSOR! JUST WANTED A FEW WORDS WITH YOU ABOUT YOUR WIFE!
SUDDENLY, AN ICY FEAR RAN THROUGH ME AS THE FIRST OF THE STUDENTS RETURNED...
GREAT SCOTT! WHAT IF ONE OF THEM SHOULD... SHOULD PICK JO ANN!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, PROFESSOR? YOU'RE WHITE AS A SHEET!
A MOMENT LATER, MY WORST FEARS WERE REALIZED, AS A STUDENT WALKED BY...WITH JO ANN, COVERED WITH A SHEET, SLUNG OVER HIS SHOULDER!
WOWIE! DID THIS BABY REALLY GET A GOING OVER!
PROFESSOR... YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?
EH? OH...YES! JUST A SLIGHT DIZZY SPELL... THAT'S ALL!
I FORCED MYSELF TO APPEAR CALM! I KEPT TELLING MYSELF THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO IDENTIFY HER...THAT THERE WAS NOTHING FOR ME TO BE NERVOUS ABOUT! AND I WAS BEGINNING TO BELIEVE IT, WHEN...
PROFESSOR! THIS CORPSE THAT I'M WORKING ON! I JUST OPENED HER UP, AND...
...AND LOOK WHAT I FOUND IN HER STOMACH! SHE EVIDENTLY SWALLOWED IT JUST BEFORE SHE DIED! MAYBE IT WOULD HELP THE POLICE FIND OUT WHO SHE IS!
A WEDDING RING! HERE, SON...LET ME SEE IT!
HMM... AN INSCRIPTION ON IT! 'TO JO ANN... FROM FRED...' JO ANN?
SAY, PROFESSOR... ISN'T THAT YOUR WIFE'S NAME?
7

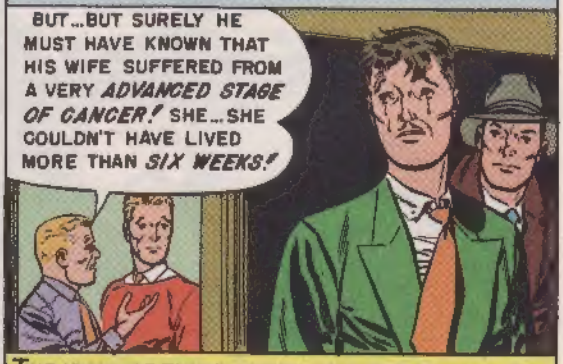
EVERYONE IN THE ENTIRE LABORATORY TURNED TO FACE ME! I KNEW WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH THEIR MINDS ...I COULD SEE IT IN THEIR EYES! A HUSH PERVADED THE ROOM... THEY WERE WAITING FOR ME TO ANSWER...

WELL, THAT DOES IT, PROFESSOR! BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO THE INSCRIPTION ON THIS RING... THIS JO ANN WAS MARRIED ON THE VERY SAME DAY... TO A GUY NAMED FRED! THAT'S YOUR NAME, ISN'T IT PROFESSOR?

THEY HAD ME... I CONFESSED EVERYTHING! THE THING THAT HURT MOST WAS THE STUNNED, BEWILDERED EXPRESSIONS OF MY STUDENTS WHO COULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT THEY HAD HEARD...

I... I COULDN'T STAND HER ANY LONGER! SHE DROVE ME TO MURDER... BUT I WAS FOOLISH TO THINK I COULD GET AWAY WITH IT!
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO PROFESSOR! THERE'S A CELL WAITING FOR YOU... AT HEADQUARTERS!

THE DETECTIVE CLAMPED HANDCUFFS TO MY WRIST AND LED ME OUT OF THE ROOM... BUT FROM THE SILENCE BEHIND, I HEARD GIBBS'S VOICE...


BUT... BUT SURELY HE MUST HAVE KNOWN THAT HIS WIFE SUFFERED FROM A VERY ADVANCED STAGE OF CANCER! SHE... SHE COULDN'T HAVE LIVED MORE THAN SIX WEEKS!

THE IRONY OF THOSE WORDS WILL HAUNT ME TO MY DYING DAY... WHICH, COME TO THINK OF IT, ISN'T VERY FAR OFF...!

The End

"ONE man's POISON!"

I HAVE TO GO BACK A BIT TO BEGIN MY STORY! I THINK THE IDEA FIRST CAME TO ME ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO! JOHN AND I HAD INVITED DICK SAXON, AN OLD FRIEND, TO DINNER! AS USUAL, WE ACTED VERY LOVEY-DOVEY IN FRONT OF DICK! ACTUALLY, WE DESPISED EACH OTHER...
WON'T YOU TRY SOME SWEET-AND-SOUR STRING BEANS, DICK?
SORRY, MARY! I NEVER LIKED STRING BEANS!
MARY AND I ADORE THEM, DICK! ESPECIALLY SWEET-AND-SOUR...
IT WAS A CRAZY PLAN... UTTER MADNESS! AND YET, THE MORE I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, THE MORE I LIKED IT! AFTER ALL, THERE WAS NO LOVE BETWEEN JOHN AND ME ANYMORE! WE FOUGHT LIKE CAT AND DOG WHENEVER WE WERE ALONE! IT WAS THE ONLY WAY OUT! THAT NIGHT, I DECIDED TO KILL MY HUSBAND...
WELL, GOOD NIGHT MARY... JOHN! THANKS FOR A DELICIOUS DINNER!
YOU'LL COME AGAIN, DICK?
YES! WE LOVE HAVING YOU!
Jack Kamen
1

OF COURSE, WE LOVED HAVING DICK! WE LOVED HAVING ANYONE IN SO THAT JOHN AND I WOULDN'T BE ALONE TOGETHER! IT WAS DISGUSTING WHEN WE WERE ALONE...
WELL? AREN'T YOU GOING TO COMPLIMENT ME ON THE DINNER?
WHAT DO YOU WANT... A MEDAL? ANY WIFE COULD DO THE SAME!
SIX YEARS WE'D BEEN MARRIED! THE FIRST YEAR WAS SWELL! THE SECOND...SO-SO! THE LAST FOUR HAD GOTTEN PROGRESSIVELY WORSE! WE WERE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS CONSTANTLY...ARGUING...INSULTING...THREATENING...
THE TROUBLE WITH YOU, YOU POMPOUS PIG, IS THAT YOU TAKE ME FOR GRANTED! YOU DON'T APPRECIATE ME!
HAH! THAT'S A LAUGH! WHAT IN BLAZES DO YOU DO THAT I SHOULD APPRECIATE? SPEND MONEY? ANY FOOL CAN DO THAT!
OH, DO ME A FAVOR AND SHUT UP... BECAUSE I'M NOT GOING TO TALK TO YOU!
WELL, THAT'LL BE A RELIEF!
SO HE STAMPED OUT OF THE DINING ROOM AND I STARTED TO CLEAN UP THE DINNER MESS...
I DON'T KNOW WHY I GO ON LIVING WITH HIM! HE MAKES ME MISERABLE! I...I'VE GOT TO KILL HIM!
MAYBE YOU'RE LIKE I WAS! ONCE UPON A TIME THE THOUGHT THAT I MIGHT WANT TO COMMIT MURDER WOULD HAVE SOUNDED ABSURD TO ME! BUT NOW, I WAS ACTUALLY PLANNING IT...
IF...IF I LEFT HIM, HE'D REFUSE TO SUPPORT ME! I'D HAVE TO GO TO WORK! BUT...IF HE WERE DEAD...I'D BE WELL OFF!
WELL OFF WAS RIGHT! FIRST OF ALL THERE WAS HIS BUSINESS! THAT WOULD BE MINE! THEN HIS INSURANCE! HE HAD SEVERAL BIG POLICIES! THEY'D PAY OFF...
...BUT IT'S GOT TO LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT! AND I THINK I KNOW THE WAY!
IT WAS A DESPERATE PLAN! HAVING DICK OVER FOR DINNER...AND HIS DISLIKE OF SWEET-AND-SOUR STRING BEANS...HAD GIVEN ME THE IDEA! DICK WAS GOING TO BE MY ALIBI! SUDDENLY JOHN'S ANGRY VOICE SHOCKED ME OUT OF MY DIABOLICAL THOUGHTS...
YOU STUPID IDIOT! YOU FORGOT TO SERVE THE WINE!
OH, DROP DEAD!
2

THE NEXT MORNING, AFTER JOHN HAD LEFT FOR THE OFFICE, I WENT DOWN INTO THE CELLAR! I OPENED THE DOORS OF THE PANTRY THAT JOHN'D BUILT FOR ME WHEN WE FIRST SET UP HOUSE . (I GUESS HE LOVED ME THEN!)... AND TOOK OUT SIX CANS OF *STRING BEANS*...

...FIVE... SIX! THIS OUGHT TO BE ENOUGH!

THEN I TOOK A CAN OPENER AND *PARTIALLY OPENED* EACH OF THE SIX CANS...

LETTING THE *AIR* IN WILL *SPOIL THE CONTENTS FAST!*

I HID THE PARTLY OPENED CANS IN A SPOT WHERE I KNEW JOHN WOULDN'T FIND THEM...

THIS IS A GOOD PLACE! IN ABOUT A *WEEK*, THEY OUGHT TO BE *PRETTY BAD!*

THEN I WAITED! THE WEEK CRAWLED BY! FINALLY, I FIGURED IT WAS TIME! I TOOK ONE OF THE CANS FROM THE HIDING PLACE AND OPENED IT ALL THE WAY...

PHEW! WHAT A *STENCH!* I'LL SAY THEY'RE *PRETTY BAD!*

AT FIRST I HESITATED! THE NAUSEATING ODOR OF THE SPOILED BEANS ALMOST MADE ME CHUCK THE WHOLE CRAZY SCHEME! BUT I THOUGHT ABOUT JOHN. HOW HE HATED ME AND I MADE UP MY MIND TO GO THROUGH WITH IT! I SCOOPED OUT *A SINGLE, FOUL-SMELLING BEAN* WITH A SPOON...

AND I ATE IT! YES, *I ATE IT*...

OOOOOUGH! GULP!

DID I GET *SICK*? *LORD!* I SHOULD HOPE TO TELL YOU! I WAS *SICK AS A DOG* ALL DAY! MY STOMACH KEPT RETCHING... I KEPT COMMUTING BETWEEN MY BED AND THE BATHROOM... AND FOR A COUPLE OF MINUTES THERE, I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO *DIE*...

OOOOOOH! THE CRAMPS! THEY'RE.. CHOKE... *KILLING ME!*

BUT I MANAGED TO KEEP ON MY FEET THAT NIGHT WHEN JOHN CAME HOME, AND HE NEVER KNEW HOW SICK I WAS...
S'MATTER WITH YOU? YOU LOOK A LITTLE GREEN AROUND THE GILLS!
IT'S YOUR CHARMING PERSONALITY! IT DISGUSTS ME!
NOBODY'S MAKING YOU STAY HERE! GO ON! IF YOU HATE ME SO MUCH... WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE?
HAH! YOU'D LIKE THAT, WOULDN'T YOU? WELL, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET OFF THAT EASY, LOVER!
A FEW DAYS LATER I WENT DOWN INTO THE CELLAR AND OPENED THE SECOND SPOILED CAN! I...I THINK I GOT SICK JUST FROM THE ODOR...
THERE...PHEW... THERE MUST BE AN EASIER WAY THAN THIS! UGH!
THIS TIME I TOOK TWO BEANS! THEY WERE RANCID AND FOUL-SMELLING, BUT I MANAGED TO GET THEM INTO MY MOUTH AND GULP THEM DOWN! THIS TIME I DIDN'T GET AS SICK AS I WAS THE FIRST TIME
MY STOMACH IS KILLING ME, BUT I'M NOT AS NAUSEOUS! IT'S JUST PAINFUL!
IN FACT, EVEN THE CRAMPS WENT AWAY FASTER! I KNEW I WAS SUCCEEDING
I'M DOING IT! I'M BUILDING UP AN IMMUNITY TO FOOD-POISONING!
TWO DAYS LATER I WAS BACK IN THE CELLAR! THIS TIME I ATE A WHOLE SPOONFUL OF THE PUTRID BEANS.
I HAVE A LITTLE PAIN AND A HEADACHE...BUT THAT'S ABOUT ALL!
THE NEXT TIME, I ATE TWO SPOONFULS OF THE REVOLTING, RANK-SMELLING STUFF...
NO ILL EFFECTS! I JUST FEEL SLIGHTLY UNCOMFORTABLE! I...I THINK I'VE DONE IT!

AFTER I'D OPENED THE FIFTH CAN, EATEN A WHOLE PORTION OF THE DECAYED FETID STRING BEANS, AND FELT ONLY SLIGHTLY HEADACHY... I KNEW IT WAS TIME...
HELLO, DICK? THIS IS MARY! OH... I'M FINE... AND YOU? GOOD! HOW ABOUT DINNER TONIGHT, DICK? YOU WILL? GRAND! ABOUT SEVEN? ALL RIGHT, SEE YOU THEN! BYE!
YES! THAT WAS MY PLAN! DICK WOULDN'T TOUCH STRING BEANS! AND HE'D BE MY ALIBI! HE'D SEE ME EAT THEM AS WELL AS JOHN...
BUT I'VE BUILT UP AN IMMUNITY TO PTOMAINE POISONING! THE PORTION OF PUTRID BEANS THAT JOHN EATS WILL KILL HIM! I'LL JUST ACT HORRIBLY SICK!
SO THIS AFTERNOON, I OPENED THE SIXTH AND LAST SPOILED CAN OF STRING-BEANS AND MADE THEM THE WAY JOHN LIKED THEM... SWEET-AND-SOUR! TONIGHT, WHEN JOHN CAME HOME...
WHAT'S THIS?
WHAT'S IT LOOK LIKE? WE'RE HAVING COMPANY FOR DINNER! DICK'S COMING OVER!
OH? WHAT'S THE OCCASION?
DOES IT HAVE TO BE AN OCCASION? MAYBE I JUST WANT SOMEONE TO TALK TO... SOMEONE WHO ACTS LIKE A HUMAN BEING INSTEAD OF A BARKING DOG!
OH, YEAH? LISTEN! IT'S JUST AS MUCH OF A PLEASURE FOR ME! AND... DON'T FORGET TO SERVE THE WINE!
IF YOU WANT IT, SERVE IT YOURSELF! I DON'T DRINK IT!
MAYBE IF YOU GOT YOURSELF TIGHT ONE NIGHT, YOU'D...
HUSH! THERE'S THE DOOR BELL! HE'S HERE... ANSWER IT... AND TRY AND PRETEND THAT YOU'RE CIVILIZED!
WELL, DICK! COME IN! COME IN!
HI, JOHN! HI, MARY!
HELLO, DICK! C'MON! DINNER'S ON!

DICK AND JOHN SAT DOWN AT THE TABLE AND I WENT INTO THE KITCHEN! I BROUGHT OUT THE PLATTER OF MEAT...
I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE SWEET-AND-SOUR STRING BEANS, SO I MADE YOU SOME CARROTS!
GOOD! I LOVE CARROTS!
I WENT BACK INTO THE KITCHEN AND BROUGHT OUT THE REST OF THE FOOD...THE ROLLS...THE CARROTS...THE MASHED POTATOES...AND THE PTOMAINE-IMPREGNATED STRING BEANS...
MMM! LOOKS GOOD! HOT ROLLS!
SWEET...AND SOUR! MY FAVORITE!
I SAT DOWN OPPOSITE DICK AND [redacted]...
WELL, FOLKS! LET'S DIG IN!
SURE, THING!
OH! THE WINE!
JOHN GOT UP AND WENT INTO THE KITCHEN! I TRIED NOT TO SHOW HOW NERVOUS I WAS...
GO AHEAD, DICK! HELP YOURSELF!
OKAY, MARY!
AFTER A WHILE, JOHN CAME OUT! HE CARRIED TWO GLASSES OF WINE! HE SMILED TOWARDS ME..
MY WIFE'S A TEETOTALER, DICK! BUT YOU'LL HAVE SOME WINE, EH?
SURE, JOHN!
HURRY, DEAR! THE FOOD'S GETTING COLD!
JOHN SAT DOWN, HELPED HIMSELF TO A HEALTHY PORTION OF THE STRING BEANS, AND WE BEGAN TO EAT! I MADE SURE DICK SAW ME EATING THE BEANS TOO...
YOU OUGHT TO TRY THEN SOME TIME, DICK!
NOT TONIGHT, DICK! THEY DON'T TASTE AS GOOD AS USUAL!
YOU BET THEY DIDN'T TASTE AS GOOD AS USUAL! I'D DOUSED THEM WITH VINEGAR TO KILL THE ODOR OF PUTRESCENCE! BUT JOHN ATE HIS HEAPING PORTION...EVERY LAST BEAN! SO DID I...
WELL! THAT WAS GOOD, MARY!
THANK YOU, DICK! WHY...YOU BOYS DIDN'T DRINK YOUR WINE!
I...I DON'T FEEL SO ..SO... OOOOOH!
6

JOHN DOUBLED UP! HE LET OUT A SCREAM OF PAIN! THAT WAS MY CUE! I STARTED TO ACT, TOO...
OH, LORD! I'M...DYING!
OOOH! MY STOMACH!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU TWO?
JOHN KEELED OVER...RIGHT OFF HIS CHAIR ONTO THE FLOOR! DICK JUMPED UP AND KNELT DOWN BESIDE HIM...
JOHN! JOHN! GOOD LORD!
DICK! CALL A DOCTOR! QUICK!
DICK STARED AT JOHN'S FACE...
HE'S DEAD! HE'S DEAD!
HURRY, DICK! I'M SICK...HURRY! THE PHONE! IN THE KITCHEN!
DICK DARTED OUT OF THE DINING ROOM INTO THE KITCHEN! I SMILED DOWN AT JOHN...
WELL! I'M RID OF YOU...YOU PIG!
I SNATCHED JOHN'S GLASS OF WINE! I LIFTED IT IN A TOAST...
THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION! HERE'S TO YOU, PUNK! AT LAST I'M FREE!
I DRAINED THE GLASS! THE WINE BURNED GOING DOWN! I GUESS I WASN'T USED TO IT! I SHOVED THE GLASS BACK ON THE TABLE AS I HEARD DICK'S FOOTSTEPS...
DID YOU.. DID YOU CALL?
YES, MARY! THE DOCTOR'LL BE RIGHT OVER! BUT I FOUND THIS NOTE BY THE PHONE! I READ IT! I DON'T UNDERSTAND! LISTEN...
DICK'S READING ME THE NOTE NOW! SOMEHOW, THE WORDS SOUND SLURRED AND FAR AWAY! THINGS ARE SPINNING! EVERYTHING...
DEAR MARY, DON'T BOTHER PHONING! IT WILL DO NO GOOD! THE POISON ACTS TOO FAST! I PUT IT IN MY WINE! I COULDN'T BEAR TO GO ON LIVING LIKE THIS ANY LONGER! SUICIDE IS THE ONLY WAY! YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE THIS BUT I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED YOU! JOHN...
...EVERYTHING IS GOING BLACK! THIS IS . THE END!

BIG MONEY

Down the subway stairs he clattered, the money-heavy satchel banging against his thigh with each desperate step. He could hear the cops racing along the sidewalk behind him, the clatter of their shoes ample warning that he had only seconds to get onto the train waiting at the platform. If those cops got to look into the satchel he was lugging, John Garrity knew, it meant a long prison term! He HAD to elude them and get away with the big money!

Until the moment he and Morse had raced through the revolving doors, Garrity thought as he elbowed his way down the subway stairs, the holdup had gone off like a dream. But the sight which greeted them at the pavement had sent a shiver of fear down their spines. Their car was waiting at the curb as they had left it . . . the motor still purring in anticipation of their getaway . . . but instead of Greeg behind the wheel, a ponderous bluecoat occupied the driver's seat! And there, on the sidewalk, arguing hotly with three other patrolmen, was their partner! Unless they could make a break for it, the game was up!

Garrity was carrying the bag of loot, and that was why HE was still free . . . still attempting to run for it! For Morse had lunged into the cops as they advanced with guns drawn . . . had thrown a devastating block and given Garrity a split-second in which to scamper down the street and lose himself in the sluggish mass of pedestrians. Garrity had sprinted toward the subway entrance, aware of the feet pounding along in pursuit . . . Garrity had been conscious of the subway beckoning as a last refuge in a hostile world. If only he could outrun the Law down the steps and through the turnstile . . . could disappear into the waiting train . . . Garrity knew he had a fair chance to escape. He HAD to make it . . . his dream of big-money was the reward for success!

Even as he scurried toward the turnstiles, Garrity dipped his free hand into his pocket in search of the fare. The train doors still yawned open before him, not twenty feet away . . . and there, beside the entrance to safety, stood a special uniformed patrolman! Garrity knew in that instant that bulling through the turnstile would arouse the attendant's suspicions and shut-off all chance for a getaway. For even if he DID get onto the train, the subway guard could keep it from leaving the station . . . could hold him for not paying his fare!

Garrity drew a fistful of coins from his pocket and stared at them in disbelief; there were pennies and nickles . . . 2 quarters and a half-dollar . . . but not a single *dime!* And the only way he could get through that turnstile to the train was to slip a ten-cent piece into the entrance slot! A dime he didn't have!

There was only *one* chance to escape now, and with a sob of frustration Garrity lurched under the wooden turnstile and moved in a frenzy toward the train. But he knew, even as he moved forward, that his last-chance attempt had failed! For the subway guard had him by the shoulders and was screaming something about his attempting to swindle the city out of a measly dime. And behind him, Garrity could hear the police racing toward him.

Even while the bag was being opened, Garrity stood by as if numbed, only dimly aware of the manacles which had been slipped around his wrists. Only dimly did he hear the cop bending over the bag whistle as he fingered through the contents of the satchel.

"Wowww!" the red-faced patrolman wheezed. "It's all here . . . just as he heisted it! Imagine a guy trying to save hisself a dime . . . when he's got a haul of over half-a-million dollars in his hand! Boyoboy . . . some guys are so cheap it's hard to believe!"

Garrity wanted to tell them *why*, but what was the use . . .

UNLIKE THE COMMON THUG, THE 'CON' MAN RELIES UPON BRAINS RATHER THAN BRAWN TO EXTRACT LOOT FROM HIS UNSUSPECTING VICTIMS! TWO INSIDIOUSLY CLEVER CONFIDENCE RACKETS ARE ILLUSTRATED IN THE FOLLOWING PAIR OF 'E.C. QUICKIES'! THE FIRST YARN IS...

TWO FOR ONE!

YOUR NAME IS *CARLTON ASHLEY*, AND YOU'RE KNOWN TO YOUR FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES AS A RESPECTABLE CITIZEN AND A REPUTABLE BUSINESSMAN! YOU'VE NEVER, IN ALL YOUR FORTY-ONE YEARS, DONE ANYTHING HIGH-HANDED OR ILLEGAL! LATELY, HOWEVER, THINGS HAVE NOT BEEN GOING WELL WITH YOU! A BUSINESS SLUMP HAS FORCED THE COMPANY YOU OWN TO THE BRINK OF BANKRUPTCY...

I'VE CHECKED THE BOOKS, SIR! *TWENTY THOUSAND* COULD DO IT!

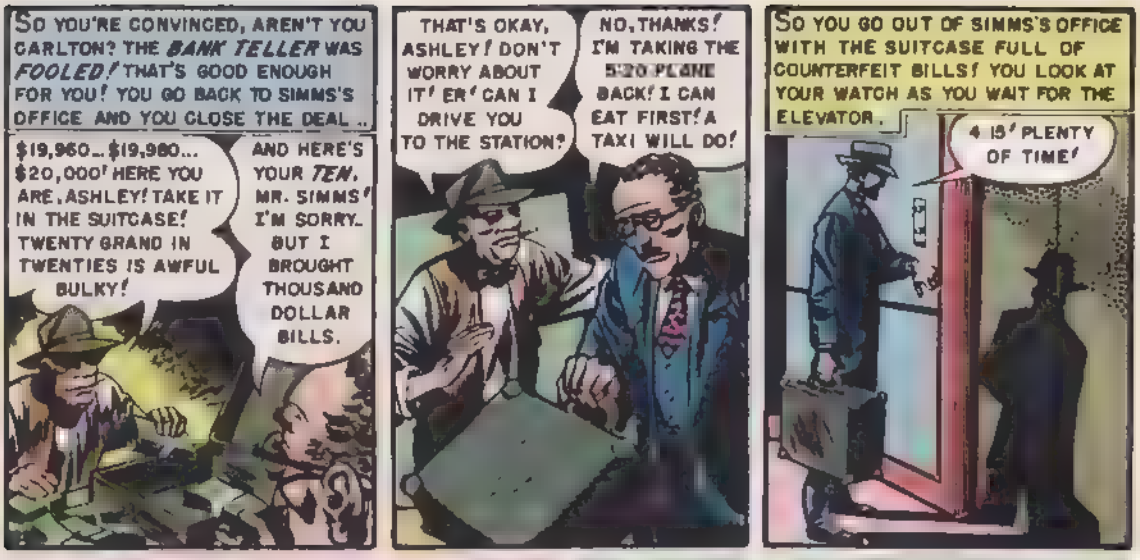
TWENTY? WHERE AM I GOING TO GET *THAT* KIND OF MONEY?

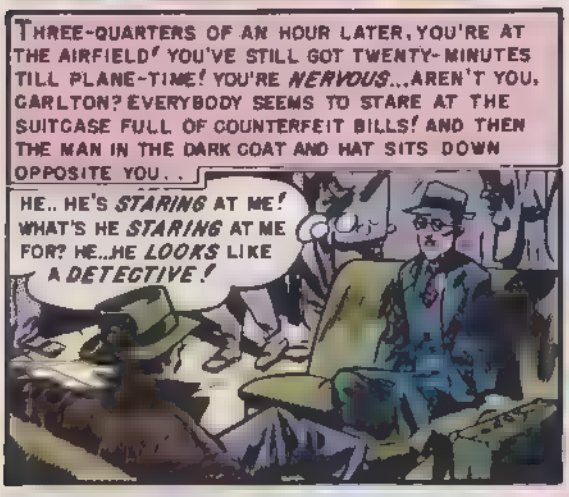
I... I *COULD* RAISE *TEN THOUSAND* OUT OF MY *PERSONAL SAVINGS*... BUT *THAT* WOULD BE THE *LIMIT!*

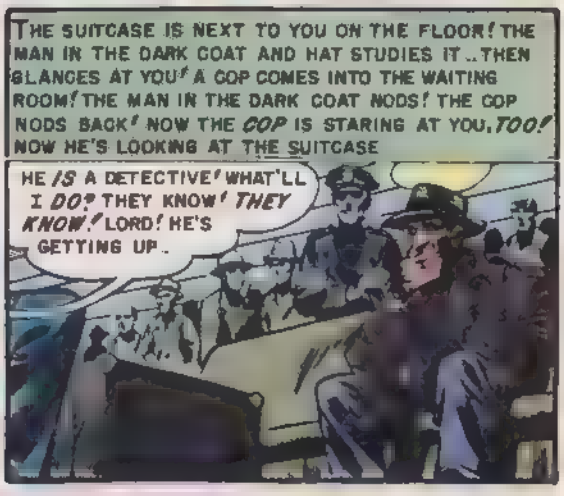
THAT WOULDN'T BE *ENOUGH*, SIR! *TWENTY* COULD TIDE YOU *OVER*, BUT *TEN... NEVER!*

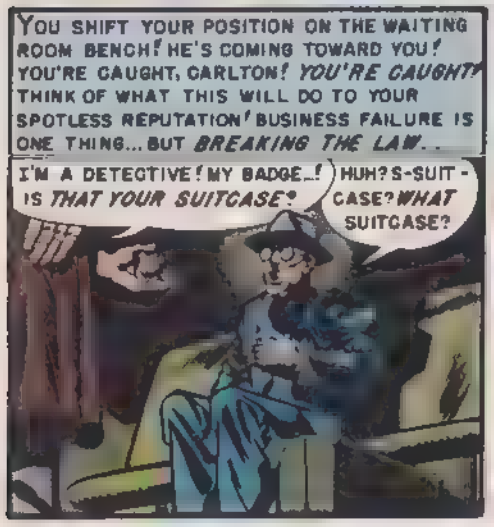
SO THERE YOU HAVE IT! NOW YOU ARE FACED WITH THE PROBLEM OF EITHER RAISING TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS...TEN OF WHICH IS ALL YOU CAN MANAGE...OR BEING FORCED TO DECLARE BANKRUPTCY AND LOSE EVERYTHING! THEN THE STRANGER COMES TO SEE YOU...
MR. ASHLEY? MY NAME IS SIMMS.. ARNOLD SIMMS! I...HAVE A BUSINESS PROPOSITION TO MAKE TO YOU! A SURE WAY OF DOUBLING YOUR INVESTMENT ALMOST IMMEDIATELY!
DOUBLING MY INVESTMENT? A SURE WAY? WHAT'S THE CATCH, MR. SIMMS?
NO CATCH, ASHLEY! IT'S A SIMPLE FOOLPROOF PLAN! YOU GET BACK TWO DOLLARS FOR EVERY ONE YOU INVEST!
I...I DON'T GET IT, MR. SIMMS! IF IT'S SUCH A SURE INVESTMENT, YOU SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE FINDING EAGER PEOPLE WHO WOULD BE GLAD TO DOUBLE THEIR MONEY!
IT'S TROUBLE FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE, MR. ASHLEY! HERE IS MY CARD! IF YOU'RE INTERESTED..COME OUT AND SEE ME!
CHICAGO? YOU CAME HERE ALL THE WAY FROM CHICAGO?
EXACTLY, MR. ASHLEY! AS I SAID, WE TAKE A LOT OF TROUBLE FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR OUR LITTLE OFFER!
WELL! TH..THANK YOU, MR SIMMS! IF I...I DECIDE. I'LL COME TO SEE YOU!
AND IT ONLY TAKES ONE MORE SESSION WITH YOUR ACCOUNTANT TO MAKE YOU DECIDE, DOESN'T IT, CARLTON?...
YOU CAN'T LAST MUCH LONGER, MR. ASHLEY! ONE OR TWO WEEKS AT THE MOST!
DON'T WORRY, BEMMER! I'LL RAISE THE TWENTY THOUSAND... SOMEHOW!
AFTER ALL, A BUSINESS FAILURE COULD RUIN YOU...NOT ONLY FINANCIALLY, BUT SOCIALLY AS WELL! AND YOU DON'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN, DO YOU, CARLTON? SO YOU SCRAPE TOGETHER YOUR TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS...AND YOU TAKE THAT PLANE TO CHICAGO TO SEE ARNOLD SIMMS...
WELL! MR. ASHLEY! COME RIGHT IN!
I...I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT INVESTMENT, SIMMS! I...I'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT IT!
YOU LOOK AROUND YOU! MR. SIMMS'S OFFICE ISN'T VERY LUXURIOUS! YOU BEGIN TO WONDER IF YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING! BUT ARNOLD IS MOVING FAST! HE'S OPENED THE SAFE AND TAKEN OUT THE SUITCASE...
HERE YOU ARE, ASHTON! ALL THE DOUGH YOU NEED!
GASP!
2

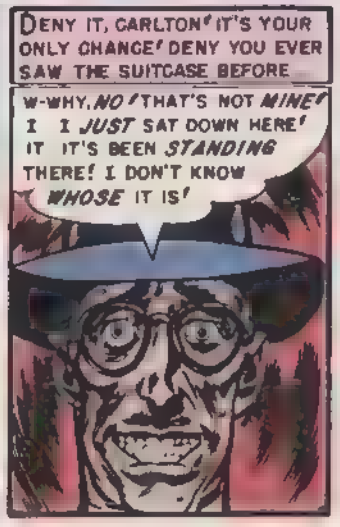
THE BILLS ARE NEW AND GREEN, AND THEY LOOK GOOD TO YOU! BUT YOU'RE PUZZLED! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...
YOU CAN BUY AS *MUCH* AS YOU *LIKE*... *TWO FOR ONE!* THERE'S EXACTLY *TWENTY* GRAND HERE! *YOU* CAN HAVE IT FOR *TEN!*
WHAT... WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH IT?
IT'S *COUNTERFEIT*, ASHLEY! *WAIT!* DON'T JUMP TO *CONCLUSIONS!* *EXAMINE* IT FIRST!
NO! I WON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO *DO* WITH IT! IT'S *CROOKED!*
ALL RIGHT, ASHLEY! *FORGET* ABOUT IT! *GO* BACK HOME! *FACE* THE MUSIC! *LOSE* YOUR *BUSINESS*... YOUR *SOCIAL STANDING!*
HOW.. HOW DID *YOU* KNOW ABOUT THAT?
I TOLD YOU, ASHLEY! WE GO TO A LOT OF TROUBLE! HOW DO YOU THINK WE'VE CONTINUED *OPERATING* FOR SO LONG? WE MAKE IT OUR *BUSINESS* TO KNOW *WHO* WE DEAL WITH! THESE BILLS ARE *PERFECT*, ASHLEY! NO BOTCHED-UP CRUDE JOB! THEY'RE *SO GOOD*, AN *EXPERT* WOULD HAVE TROUBLE TELLING THEY'RE COUNTERFEIT! HERE! *LOOK!*
THEY.. THEY *DO* LOOK VERY GENUINE! FRANKLY.. I... *I* CAN'T TELL!
BUSINESSMEN LIKE *YOU* ARE OUR ONLY CLIENTS! MEN WHO ARE *RESPECTED* IN THEIR COMMUNITIES! WHY, *NO ONE* WOULD *QUESTION* IT IF *YOU* PASSED THIS MONEY AROUND! THEY *TRUST* YOU! HERE! *TAKE* A BILL... *ANY* ONE! GO TO A *BANK* WITH IT! *CONVINCE* YOURSELF HOW *EASY* IT COULD BE!
YOU YOU WOULDN'T *MIND?* THEY'RE... *THAT* GOOD?
YOU'RE *CONFUSED*... AREN'T YOU, CARLTON? YOU DON'T KNOW *WHAT* TO DO! IT *COULD* BE EASY... AND YET YOU'D LIKE TO *CONVINCE* YOURSELF SO YOU REACH DOWN INTO THE GREEN PILE AND YOU *TAKE* A TWENTY! AND YOU *GO* TO A BANK...
MAY... MAY I HAVE *CHANGE* OF THIS... TWENTY DOLLAR BILL?
OF COURSE, SIR! HOW WOULD YOU *LIKE* IT?
OH... *ANY* WAY! ER! DOES THAT BILL LOOK.. WELL... I WAS WONDERING... WITH ALL THESE STORIES GOING AROUND ABOUT *COUNTERFEITS*...
HUH? OH! NOPE! THIS BILL LOOKS OKAY TO ME, SIR! FOUR *FIVES* GOOD ENOUGH?
3


SO YOU'RE CONVINCED, AREN'T YOU CARLTON? THE BANK TELLER WAS FOOLED! THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU! YOU GO BACK TO SIMMS'S OFFICE AND YOU CLOSE THE DEAL ..
$19,960... $19,980... $20,000! HERE YOU ARE, ASHLEY! TAKE IT IN THE SUITCASE! TWENTY GRAND IN TWENTIES IS AWFUL BULKY!
AND HERE'S YOUR TEN, MR. SIMMS! I'M SORRY.. BUT I BROUGHT THOUSAND DOLLAR BILLS.
THAT'S OKAY, ASHLEY! DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT! ER! CAN I DRIVE YOU TO THE STATION?
NO, THANKS! I'M TAKING THE 5:20 PLANE BACK! I CAN EAT FIRST! A TAXI WILL DO!
SO YOU GO OUT OF SIMMS'S OFFICE WITH THE SUITCASE FULL OF COUNTERFEIT BILLS! YOU LOOK AT YOUR WATCH AS YOU WAIT FOR THE ELEVATOR.
4:15! PLENTY OF TIME!


THREE-QUARTERS OF AN HOUR LATER, YOU'RE AT THE AIRFIELD! YOU'VE STILL GOT TWENTY-MINUTES TILL PLANE-TIME! YOU'RE NERVOUS... AREN'T YOU, CARLTON? EVERYBODY SEEMS TO STARE AT THE SUITCASE FULL OF COUNTERFEIT BILLS! AND THEN THE MAN IN THE DARK COAT AND HAT SITS DOWN OPPOSITE YOU..
HE.. HE'S STARING AT ME! WHAT'S HE STARING AT ME FOR? HE... HE LOOKS LIKE A DETECTIVE!


THE SUITCASE IS NEXT TO YOU ON THE FLOOR! THE MAN IN THE DARK COAT AND HAT STUDIES IT.. THEN GLANCES AT YOU! A COP COMES INTO THE WAITING ROOM! THE MAN IN THE DARK COAT NODS! THE COP NODS BACK! NOW THE COP IS STARING AT YOU, TOO! NOW HE'S LOOKING AT THE SUITCASE
HE IS A DETECTIVE! WHAT'LL I DO? THEY KNOW! THEY KNOW! LORD! HE'S GETTING UP..

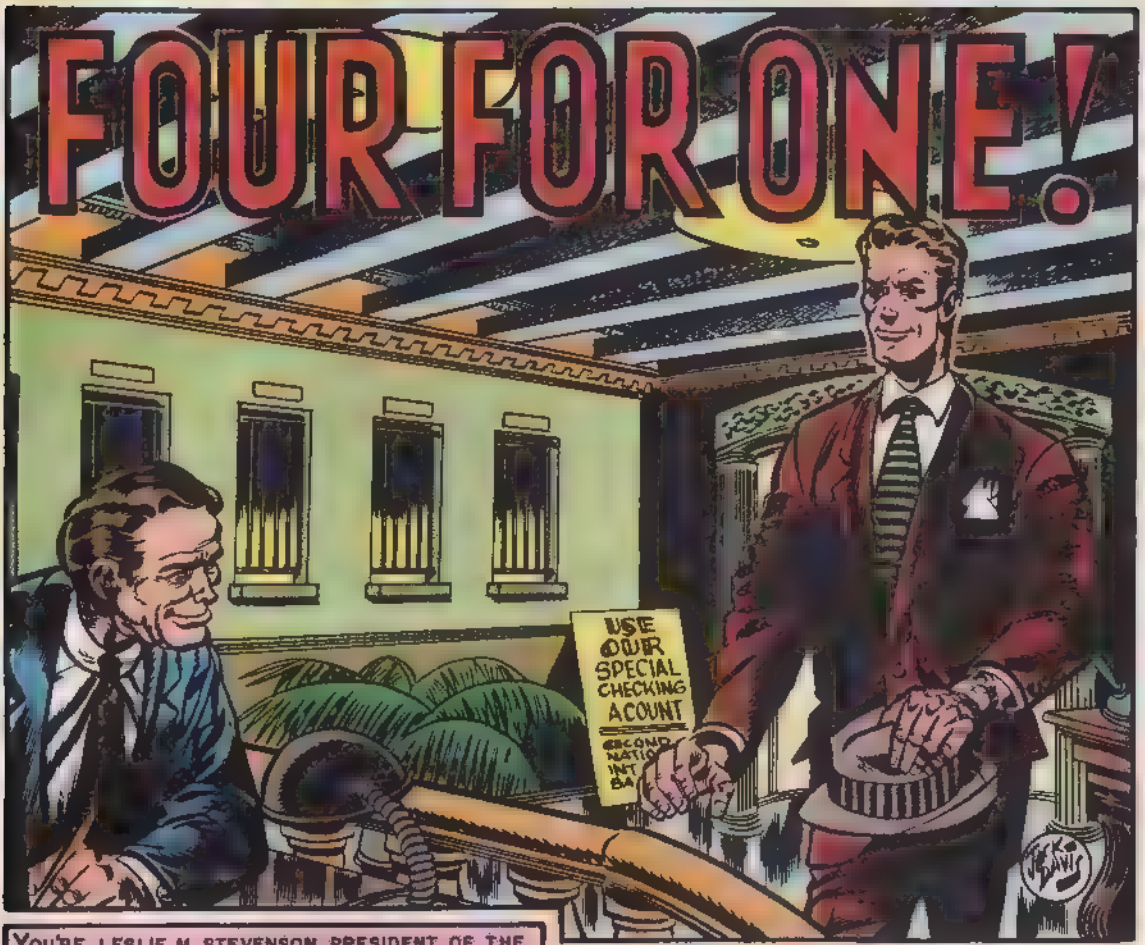

YOU SHIFT YOUR POSITION ON THE WAITING ROOM BENCH! HE'S COMING TOWARD YOU! YOU'RE CAUGHT, CARLTON! YOU'RE CAUGHT! THINK OF WHAT THIS WILL DO TO YOUR SPOTLESS REPUTATION! BUSINESS FAILURE IS ONE THING... BUT BREAKING THE LAW..
I'M A DETECTIVE! MY BADGE..! IS THAT YOUR SUITCASE?
HUH? S-SUIT-CASE? WHAT SUITCASE?


DENY IT, CARLTON! IT'S YOUR ONLY CHANCE! DENY YOU EVER SAW THE SUITCASE BEFORE
W-WHY, NO! THAT'S NOT MINE! I I JUST SAT DOWN HERE! IT IT'S BEEN STANDING THERE! I DON'T KNOW WHOSE IT IS!

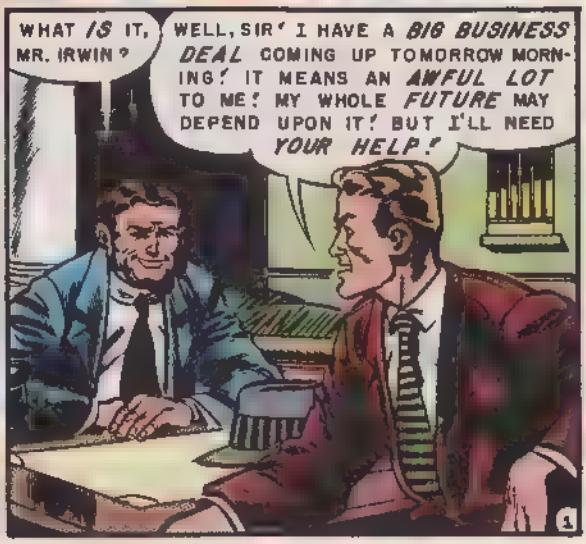
YOU'RE SAFE, AREN'T YOU, CARLTON? THE DETECTIVE NODDED TO THE COP AND THEY TOOK THE SUITCASE AWAY! AND NOW YOU'RE FLYING HOME TO FACE THE MUSIC! ONLY YOU DON'T KNOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN 'CONNED'... BUT GOOD! WHY, RIGHT NOW, YOUR ACCOUNTANT IS PAYING EVERYBODY OFF! OH, YES... HE ENGINEERED THE WHOLE THING! THE BILLS IN THE SUITCASE? REAL... CARLTON! VERY REAL! NOT COUNTERFEIT AT ALL! TWENTY-THOUSAND DOLLARS AND A RENTED POLICE UNIFORM MADE TEN THOUSAND PROFIT! NOT BAD... EH, CARLTON? NOT BAD AT ALL!

CLEVER, HUH? YOU AIN'T SEEN *NUTHIN'* YET! THE RATIO IN *THIS* 'E.C. QUICKIE' IS DOUBLED...

FOUR FOR ONE!



YOU'RE LESLIE M. STEVENSON, PRESIDENT OF THE CITY BANK AND TRUST COMPANY! AS YOU LOOK UP FROM YOUR DESK ONE MORNING, YOU SEE A NICE LOOKING, CLEAN-CUT YOUNG MAN STRIDE ACROSS THE BANK LOBBY AND INTO YOUR OFFICE...


WHAT *IS* IT, MR. IRWIN?
WELL, SIR! I HAVE A *BIG BUSINESS DEAL* COMING UP TOMORROW MORNING! IT MEANS AN *AWFUL LOT* TO ME! MY WHOLE *FUTURE* MAY DEPEND UPON IT! BUT I'LL NEED *YOUR HELP!*

YOU LIKE THE LOOKS OF THIS YOUNG MAN AND YOU'RE INTERESTED IN HIS PROBLEM...
HOW CAN I HELP YOU, MR. IRWIN?
WELL, SIR! YOU KNOW HOW IT IS IN BUSINESS...
...YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE A BIG IMPRESSION! WELL, FRANKLY I'VE... SORT OF...EXAGGERATED MY WEALTH TO A PROSPECTIVE CLIENT! TOMORROW, IF HE ACCEPTS MY...ER... OFFER, I'LL HAVE TO PAY HIM TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS!
YOU MEAN YOU'D LIKE US TO LOAN YOU TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS?
OH, NO, SIR! I HAVE THE MONEY! HERE IT IS! I WANT TO DEPOSIT IT IN YOUR BANK IN A CHECKING ACCOUNT! YOU SEE, I WANT TO... WELL, YOU KNOW... DASH OFF A CHECK IN PAYMENT!
OH, I SEE! WHY WE'LL BE GLAD TO OPEN AN ACCOUNT FOR YOU, MR. IRWIN!
YOU LIKE THE FRANKNESS OF THIS MAN, DON'T YOU, LESLIE STEVENSON?
BUT THIS IS THE FAVOR I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU, SIR! TOMORROW AT ELEVEN, MY CLIENT WILL PROBABLY COME INTO THE BANK TO CASH THE CHECK! I'D LIKE YOU...WELL.. THAT IS...
GO ON, MR. IRWIN!
I'D LIKE HIM TO GET THE IDEA THAT I'M KNOWN HERE! YOU UNDERSTAND! IT WOULD IMPRESS HIM IF, WHEN HE PRESENTED THE CHECK, THE TELLER RECOGNIZED MY SIGNATURE RIGHT OFF THE BAT.. AND PAID HIM IMMEDIATELY, AS IF I WROTE CHECKS LIKE THAT EVERY DAY!
I SEE!
WELL, MR. IRWIN! I'M SURE THAT CAN BE ARRANGED! I'LL NOTIFY EACH TELLER OF YOUR WISHES! YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE ME FIVE SPECIMENS OF YOUR SIGNATURE.. JUST TO BE SAFE, YOU KNOW! I'LL GIVE ONE TO EACH TELLER SO THAT NO MATTER WHICH WINDOW YOUR CLIENT COMES TO, THE TELLER WILL PAY HIM IMMEDIATELY!
I'M REALLY MOST GRATEFUL FOR THIS, MR STEVENSON! THANK YOU!
SO NOW YOU'RE HAPPY, AREN'T YOU, LESLIE STEVENSON? YOU'RE HELPING A YOUNG MAN TAKE THE FIRST STEP UP THE LADDER TO SUCCESS! YOU OPEN MR. IRWIN'S ACCOUNT...AND HE SIGNS THE NECESSARY FORMS! THEN YOU INSTRUCT EACH OF YOUR FIVE TELLERS TO PAY MR. IRWIN'S CHECK IMMEDIATELY WHEN IT IS PRESENTED! AND THE NEXT DAY YOU FEEL GOOD ALL OVER, DON'T YOU, MR. STEVENSON?! ONLY YOU'RE BUSY ABOUT ELEVEN O'CLOCK...
..YOU DON'T SEE THE GENTLEMAN COME TO WINDOW ONE AND PRESENT THE CHECK...
I'D LIKE TO CASH THIS CHECK! IT'S FOR TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS!
OH! MR. IRWIN'S CHECK! OF COURSE, SIR! WILL THOUSAND DOLLAR BILLS BE ALL RIGHT?
AND YOU DON'T KNOW THAT AT THAT EXACT MOMENT...AT EACH OF THE OTHER FOUR WINDOWS ..FOUR OTHER CHECKS ARE BEING CASHED... EACH FOR TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS...EACH WITH MR. IRWIN'S SIGNATURE...
MR. IRWIN'S CHECK? OH... YES, SIR!
IMMEDIATELY, SIR!
HERE YOU ARE, SIR!
RIGHT AWAY, SIR!
THE END
2

THE HAUNT OF FEAR

HEE, HEE! YEP, IT'S *ME* AGAIN, KIDDIES. . YOUR *CREEPS- COOKER-UPPER, THE OLD WITCH,* MISTRESS OF *THE HAUNT OF FEAR!* IN EACH ISSUE OF CRIME SUSPENSTORIES, I LIGHT THE FIRE UNDER MY *CAULDRON* AND *BREW* A *BRISTLING BOWLFUL OF TANTALIZING TERROR TIDBITS, GARNISHED WITH GORE,* AND *TOPPED OFF* WITH A *DASH OF DISGUST!* THIS *MAD-MORSEL OF MORBIDITY* I AM ABOUT TO DISH OUT TO YOU TAKES PLACE IN THE *TROPICS*... WHERE IT'S... *HOT!* I CALL IT . .

A FOOL AND HIS HONEY ARE SOON PARTED!

THE TROPIC NIGHT HUNG OVER THE PLANTATION LIKE A BLACK BLANKET! THE AIR WAS HOT AND DAMP, AND BREATHING WAS DIFFICULT! THE PLANTATION OVERSEER AND HIS GUEST SAT UPON THE OPEN VERANDA... FANNING THEMSELVES, AND SIPPING COOLING DRINKS...

TELL ME, ARMAND! WHY DID YOU WISH TO SEE ME *ALONE?* WHY DID YOU ASK ME TO SEND NANETTE *INSIDE?*

THE NEWS I HAVE IS *NOT GOOD,* CHARLES! I. I DID NOT WANT YOUR WIFE TO HEAR IT, *MON AMI!*

COME, COME, ARMAND! TELL ME! WHAT IS IT? WHAT BRINGS YOU ACROSS THE PENINSULA FROM YOUR OWN PLANTATION?
THE HOME OFFICE! I HAVE RECEIVED WORD FROM MY GOOD FRIEND WHO WORKS THERE!
WHAT IS IT?
THE HOME OFFICE IS SENDING A MAN TO CHECK UP ON THE PLANTATIONS!
SO? IS THAT SO TERRIBLE? I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE! MY PLANTATION IS RUN...
NO, CHARLES! IT IS NOT THAT! IT IS THE MAN THE OFFICE SENDS THAT I HAVE COME TO WARN YOU ABOUT!
HE... HE IS NO GOOD, CHARLES! MY FRIEND KNOWS HIM! HE IS .. HE IS A GIGOLO... A LOVE-PIRATE! HE HAS NO SCRUPLES! YOU MUST SEND YOUR WIFE AWAY! SHE MUST NOT BE HERE WHEN HE COMES!
BAH! I DO NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT NANETTE, ARMAND! SHE LOVES ME!
PLEASE, CHARLES! YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND! THIS IS A LONELY LIFE FOR A WOMAN LIVING ON A PLANTATION! I WARN YOU! SHE WILL BE EASY PREY FOR A SOFT WORD A CHARMING SMILE! IT IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD...
ENOUGH! YOU INSULT MY MARRIAGE, ARMAND! I DEMAND THAT YOU APOLOGIZE!
CHARLES! YOU ARE A NAIVE FOOL! I DO NOT INSULT YOUR MARRIAGE! I AM TELLING YOU THIS FOR YOUR OWN SAKE... TO SAFEGUARD IT! TAKE MY ADVICE, CHARLES! SEND NANETTE AWAY FOR A FEW MONTHS.
NANETTE! COME SAY GOOD NIGHT TO M'SIEU BOVANT! HE IS LEAVING!
A SLIM ATTRACTIVE WOMAN CAME OUT ONTO THE VERANDA...
YOU YOU ARE LEAVING, M'SIEU BOVANT? BUT WHY NOT STAY TILL MORNING?
M'SIEU BOVANT MUST RETURN TO HIS OWN PLANTATION TONIGHT, NANETTE! BON SOIR, M'SIEU!
Y YES! I HAVE PRESSING BUSINESS I MUST RETURN TO! BON SOIR, MADAME CARTIER... M'SIEU CARTIER!
2

A WEEK LATER, DRESSED IN A NEATLY-PRESSED WHITE PANAMA SUIT AND A SPOTLESS PITH-HELMET, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOME OFFICE ARRIVED AT THE CARTIER PLANTATION...
BON JOUR M'SIEU! I AM RUDOLPH MARCHAND! I AM HERE ON AN INSPECTION TOUR FOR THE COMPANY!
A PLEASURE, M'SIEU! I AM CHARLES CARTIER! THIS IS MY WIFE!
HOW DO YOU DO, M'SIEU MARCHAND!
AH, MADAME! THERE IS NO NEED FOR SUCH FORMALITY! SINCE I WILL BE STAYING WITH YOU FOR A WEEK OR SO, WHY NOT CALL ME RUDY? AFTER ALL, WE WILL GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER QUITE WELL IN THAT TIME!
OF..COURSE, RUDY! AND YOU MAY CALL US... CHARLES... AND NANETTE!
OH! I ALMOST FORGOT! THIS IS FOR YOU, NANETTE! A LITTLE GIFT!
WHY THANK YOU... RUDY!
ISN'T THAT THOUGHTFUL, CHARLES? LOOK! RUDY HAS GIVEN ME A BOTTLE OF PERFUME! THANK YOU SO MUCH, RUDY!
DIRECT FROM PARIS, NANETTE! IT IS THE FINEST MADE!
COME, M'SIEU MARCHAND! I WILL SHOW YOU YOUR ROOM!
OF COURSE! BUT PLEASE.. NOT 'M'SIEU MARCHAND'! 'RUDY'! EH, CHARLES?
THAT EVENING, CHARLES SMOKED HIS PIPE IN SILENCE AS HE SAT ON THE VERANDA! INSIDE THE PLANTATION HOUSE, RUDY AND NANETTE DANCED TO THE MUSIC OF A SCRATCHY RECORD ON AN OLD PHONOGRAPH.
I HAVE NOT DANCED IN MONTHS, RUDY! YOU... YOU ARE A VERY GOOD DANCER, TOO!
NO, NO, NANETTE! IT IS MY PARTNER WHO MAKES ME DANCE WELL!
HMMPH!
LATER, RUDY AND NANETTE STROLLED IN THE MOONLIGHT! CHARLES JUST SAT AND SMOKED.
MY HUSBAND WORKS SO HARD ON THE PLANTATION DURING THE DAY THAT WE NEVER GO WALKING LIKE THIS AT NIGHT!
AH, YOUR HUSBAND IS A FOOL, NANETTE! TO HAVE NO TIME FOR BEAUTY IS TO BE DEAD!
3

THE DAYS CRAWLED BY FOR CHARLES! EACH AFTERNOON, HE WOULD SHOW RUDY THE OPERATIONS OF THE PLANTATION... EACH EVENING HE WOULD SIT ON THE VERANDA, SMOKING, WHILE HIS WIFE 'ENTERTAINED' THEIR GUEST...
IT MUST BE VERY *LONELY* FOR YOU HERE...SO FAR FROM CIVILIZATION!
I...I HAVE MY *HUSBAND*...
OF COURSE! BUT EVEN *HUSBANDS* CAN BE...*DULL* AT TIMES... EH, NANETTE?
SH-H-H! *PLEASE!* HE WILL *HEAR* YOU!
MEET ME TONIGHT... AFTER HE IS ASLEEP!
NO! NO... I COULD NOT! IF... IF HE FOUND OUT...
THAT NIGHT...
SO YOU *DID* COME, MY DARLING! I *KNEW* YOU WOULD!
OH, RUDY! I.. I COULD NOT *HELP* MYSELF! I WAITED UNTIL HE *FELL ASLEEP*...
BUT AS THE TROPIC MOON SHONE DOWN UPON THE COUPLE, A FIGURE STIRRED IN THE BRUSH BEYOND THEIR RENDEZVOUS! CHARLES CARTIER WATCHED...
DEAREST.. NANETTE!
K-KISS ME... RUDY!
THE NEXT DAY, CHARLES ANNOUNCED AT BREAKFAST...
THE *NATIVES* HAVE INVITED US TO ATTEND THE *CEREMONY CELEBRATING THE CHIEF'S DAUGHTER'S FORTHCOMING MARRIAGE!*
OH, HOW *WONDERFUL!*
IT SHOULD BE VERY *INTERESTING!*
THAT AFTERNOON, SLIM BROWN BODIES, LITHE AND AGILE, CAVORTED BEFORE THE CARTIERS AND THEIR GUEST! THE NATIVE BETROTHAL CEREMONY HAD BEGUN...
THIS CEREMONY WILL LAST TILL *MIDNIGHT!* THEN THE *FUTURE BRIDE* RETIRES TO THE *MARRIAGE HUT*... AND *REMAINS* THERE ALL ALONE UNTIL THE *GROOM* ARRIVES!
IS...IS *THAT* THE CHIEF'S DAUGHTER, CHARLES? THE FUTURE BRIDE...?
4

SHE IS VERY ATTRACTIVE!
DO NOT STARE AT HER RUDY! IT IS UNWISE! THE CHIEF IS WATCHING YOU!
THE NATIVES CONSIDER IT AN INSULT! IN FACT, AFTER THE FUTURE BRIDE RETIRES TO THE MARRIAGE HUT, NO MALE MAY LOOK AT HER!
HOW LONG DOES SHE STAY THERE?
TILL THE GROOM COMES! ABOUT THREE DAYS! SHE STAYS IN THE HUT... ANOINTING HERSELF WITH PERFUMED SALVES... WAITING FOR HIM! SHE IS ALL ALONE...UNCLOTHED!
SOUNDS GAY!
IT'S A VERY SERIOUS RITUAL WITH THESE NATIVES! AND JUST FOR THE RECORD... IF THE NATIVES WERE TO CATCH A MALE SPYING ON HER, IT WOULD MEAN DEATH... BY TORTURE!
IF THEY CAUGHT HIM!
COME! LET US GO! IT IS GETTING DARK!
THAT NIGHT... CHARLES, NANETTE, AND RUDY SAT ON THE VERANDA, LISTENING TO THE DISTANT NATIVE DRUMS...
HOW LONG DOES THAT INCESSANT THROBBING GO ON, CHARLES?
UNTIL MIDNIGHT, RUDY! WELL, I AM TIRED! I THINK I WILL TURN IN! COMING, NANETTE?
I...I COULD NOT SLEEP WITH THOSE DRUMS GOING LIKE THAT, CHARLES! I WILL STAY UP FOR A WHILE...
I WILL KEEP YOU COMPANY, NANETTE!
BON SOIR, THEN!
CHARLES WENT INTO THE HOUSE! NANETTE AND RUDY SAT QUIETLY STARING INTO THE DARKNESS LISTENING TO THE DRUMS! THEN...
HE... HE MUST BE ASLEEP BY NOW, DEAREST!
COME! LET US WALK A BIT!
5

LATER THAT NIGHT, A FIGURE IN A NEATLY-PRESSED PANAMA SUIT AND PITH-HELMET MADE HIS WAY QUIETLY THROUGH THE JUNGLE TO THE NATIVE VILLAGE...

THE DRUMS HAD STOPPED AND THE VILLAGE LAY IN DARKNESS! THE FIGURE MOVED TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE MARRIAGE HUT...

...AND STEPPED INSIDE! A GLOW OF LIGHT STREAKED FROM THE HUT! SUDDENLY, THE SILENCE WAS SHATTERED BY AN EAR-SPLITTING SCREAM...

EEEEEEEAAAAAHH...

THE FIGURE REAPPEARED ONCE MORE...DARTING FROM THE HUT! ITS HEAD WAS BARE AS IT SCRAMBLED TOWARD THE JUNGLE...

EEEEEEE! BWANA!

BWANA!

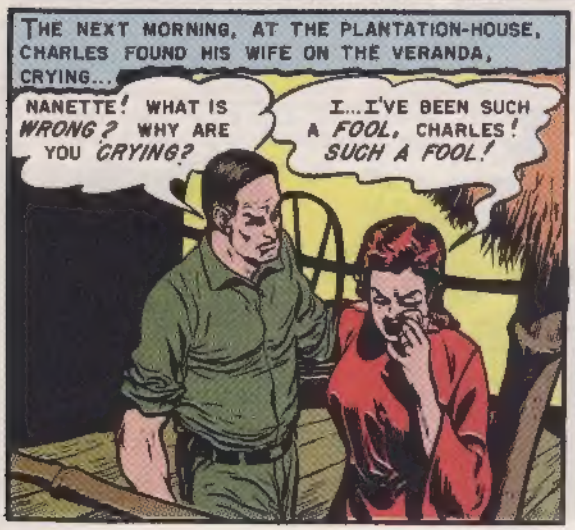
THE VILLAGE WAS SUDDENLY THROWN INTO A TURMOIL! NATIVES SCURRIED ABOUT... SHOUTING! THE TRIBAL CHIEF ENTERED THE MARRIAGE HUT.. AND THEN EMERGED, CARRYING SOMETHING IN HIS HAND...

...A *PITH-HELMET!* THE CHIEF TURNED IT OVER...EXAMINING IT CAREFULLY! A GLEAM OF RECOGNITION CROSSED HIS ANGRY FACE...

THE NEXT MORNING, AT THE PLANTATION-HOUSE, CHARLES FOUND HIS WIFE ON THE VERANDA, CRYING...

NANETTE! WHAT IS *WRONG?* WHY ARE YOU *CRYING?*

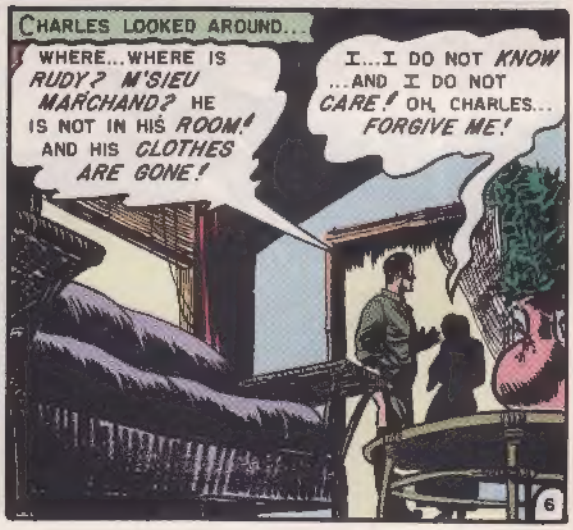
I...I'VE BEEN SUCH A *FOOL*, CHARLES! *SUCH A FOOL!*



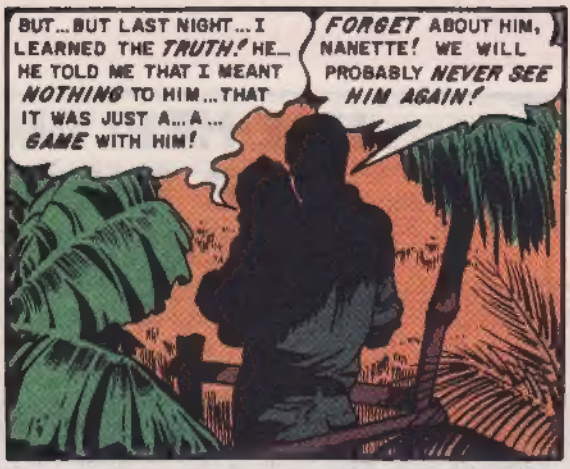
CHARLES LOOKED AROUND...

WHERE...WHERE IS *RUDY? M'SIEU MARCHAND?* HE IS NOT IN HIS *ROOM!* AND HIS *CLOTHES ARE GONE!*

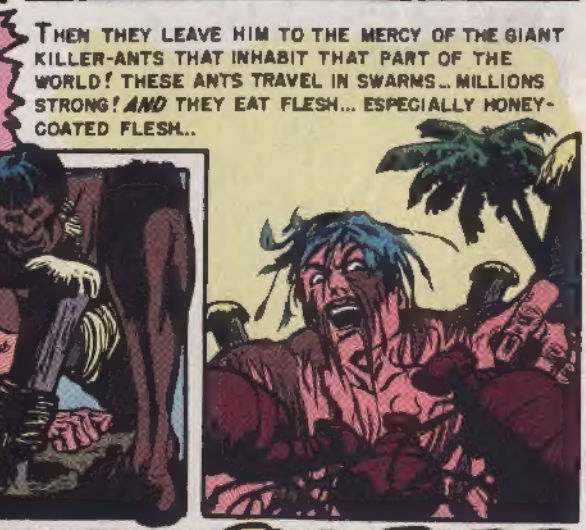
I...I DO NOT *KNOW* ...AND I DO NOT *CARE!* OH, CHARLES... *FORGIVE ME!*

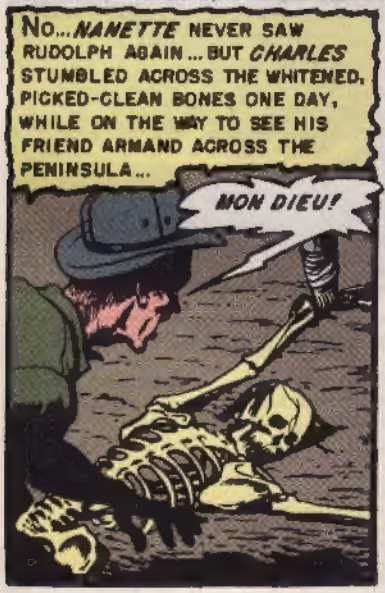


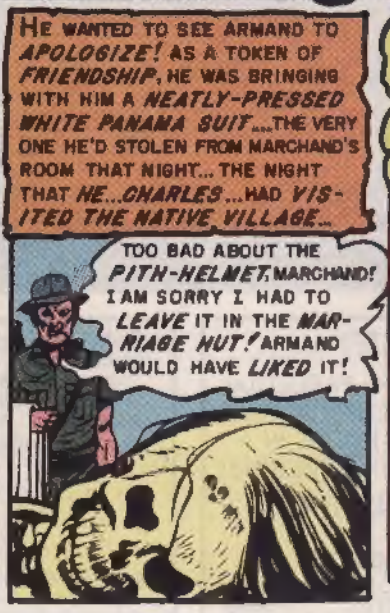
THERE IS NOTHING TO *FORGIVE*, NANETTE!
BUT THERE *IS!* I WAS GOING TO *LEAVE* YOU! I WAS GOING TO GO *AWAY* WITH... WITH *HIM*... MARCHAND! I THOUGHT I *LOVED* HIM!

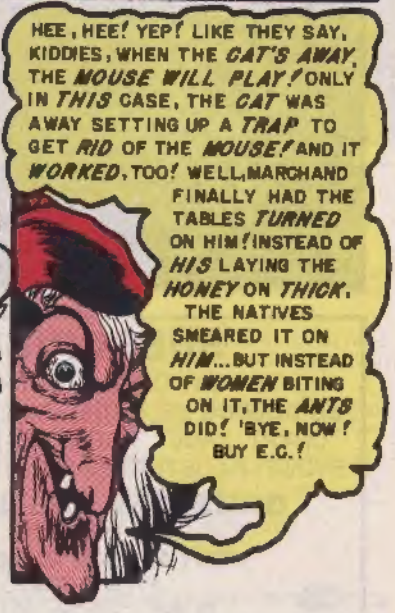

BUT... BUT LAST NIGHT... I LEARNED THE *TRUTH!* HE... HE TOLD ME THAT I MEANT *NOTHING* TO HIM... THAT IT WAS JUST A... A... *GAME* WITH HIM!
FORGET ABOUT HIM, NANETTE! WE WILL PROBABLY *NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN!*

INDEED, *NANETTE* NEVER SAW RUDOLPH MARCHAND AGAIN! IN THE TROPIC REGION WHERE THE CARTIER PLANTATION IS LOCATED, THE NATIVES HAVE INGENIUS METHODS OF PUNISHING EVIL ONES! THEY TIE THEIR VICTIM SPREAD-EAGLE ON THE GROUND... AND COAT HIS BARED BODY WITH HONEY...


THEN THEY LEAVE HIM TO THE MERCY OF THE GIANT KILLER-ANTS THAT INHABIT THAT PART OF THE WORLD! THESE ANTS TRAVEL IN SWARMS... MILLIONS STRONG! *AND* THEY EAT FLESH... ESPECIALLY HONEY-COATED FLESH...


NO... *NANETTE* NEVER SAW RUDOLPH AGAIN... BUT *CHARLES* STUMBLED ACROSS THE WHITENED, PICKED-CLEAN BONES ONE DAY, WHILE ON THE WAY TO SEE HIS FRIEND ARMAND ACROSS THE PENINSULA...
MON DIEU!


HE WANTED TO SEE ARMAND TO *APOLOGIZE!* AS A TOKEN OF *FRIENDSHIP*, HE WAS BRINGING WITH HIM A *NEATLY-PRESSED WHITE PANAMA SUIT*... THE VERY ONE HE'D STOLEN FROM MARCHAND'S ROOM THAT NIGHT... THE NIGHT THAT *HE... CHARLES*... HAD *VISITED THE NATIVE VILLAGE*...
TOO BAD ABOUT THE *PITH-HELMET*, MARCHAND! I AM SORRY I HAD TO *LEAVE* IT IN THE *MARRIAGE HUT!* ARMAND WOULD HAVE *LIKED* IT!


HEE, HEE! YEP! LIKE THEY SAY, KIDDIES, WHEN THE *CAT'S AWAY*, THE *MOUSE WILL PLAY!* ONLY IN *THIS* CASE, THE *CAT* WAS AWAY SETTING UP A *TRAP* TO GET *RID* OF THE *MOUSE!* AND IT *WORKED*, TOO! WELL, MARCHAND FINALLY HAD THE TABLES *TURNED* ON HIM! INSTEAD OF *HIS* LAYING THE *HONEY* ON *THICK*, THE NATIVES SMEARED IT ON *HIM*... BUT INSTEAD OF *WOMEN* BITING ON IT, THE *ANTS* DID! 'BYE, NOW! BUY E.C.!